

Four Years Old Saves the Day.

DARMSTADT, Germany -- The safety lessons that a quick-thinking 4-year-old learned at Darmstadt Community's Family Child Care preschool helped save the day during a recent household fire.

Kethrie Lee was in her Griesheim area apartment when a small fire started as her mother was cooking. When she saw the flames, Christine Lee quickly acted to get Kethrie and her 18-month-old brother out of danger. In the excitement, Christine momentarily forgot the phone number for the German fire department.

"You dial 112 Mama," said Kethrie.

Christine dialed the number and was able to say enough words in German about the fire and the street address to get the local fire department to her residence. Once there, firefighters determined that the damage was limited to the family crock pot. The cord had caught fire when it touched a hot burner on the stove.

"I kept thinking, 'I'm going to burn down the house and my husband is going to get in trouble,'" said Christine. Although she didn't burn down the apartment building, she said she shudders to think about what could have happened. She also said she is extremely proud that her daughter acted so calmly and knew the number to call.

Kethrie learned her emergency skills through her schooling with the Family Child Care hourly outreach and part-day preschool programs. Because she is enrolled in two different programs she has had fire safety training many times, said Deborah Mandrell, Garrison Darmstadt's Family Child Care director.

"FCC providers must conduct a fire drill each month," said Mandrell. "In addition to the monthly fire drills, fire Safety training must be conducted no later than three days after a new child enters the program." Kethrie's calmness and level-headedness speaks volumes about the FCC program, providers and military families, said Mandrell.



"We provide consistent training and maintain high standards in our community," said Mandrell. "It is the FCC provider who demonstrates this commitment on a daily basis to each family they serve as they teach the everyday lessons in extraordinary ways." Christine couldn't agree more.

Asked about the fire, Kethrie replied nonchalantly, "I said, 'Dial 112' and I saved the whole town."

(Story and photo provided by Jayme Loppnow, Herald Post, USAG Heidelberg)